

S K E T C H
OF THE
D E B A T E S
IN THE
H O U S E O F C O M M O N S
OF IRELAND,

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 1792,

INCLUDING

THE DISCUSSION, ON THE RECEPTION OF THE
BELFAST PROTESTANT PETITION, ON BEHALF
OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS OF IRELAND;

AND THE

DEBATE ON MR. G. PONSONBY'S MOTION

F O R

LEAVE TO INTRODUCE A BILL FOR THE REPEAL OF
ALL EXISTING RESTRICTIONS ON THE RIGHT
OF THIS COUNTRY TO TRADE BEYOND
THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

D U B L I N :

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S K E T C H, &c.

Wednesday, February 9, 1792.

THE *Speaker* having taken the chair,

The right honourable *John O'Neill* rose and said, he held in his hand a petition signed by six hundred inhabitants of the town of Belfast—many of whom he personally knew to be men of worth and respectability. It had been put into his hands by a very respectable body of these inhabitants, with a request that he would present it to the House of Commons; and with that request he thought it his duty to comply. He then read the prayer of the petition, which entreated that the Roman Catholics of Ireland might be restored to the rank and consequence of citizen subjects—and he moved that the petition be now received.

Sir Henry Cavendish hoped the right honourable gentleman would be so good as to state the whole contents of the petition—it was strictly parliamentary so to do, and he hoped it contained nothing indecent or disrespectful to the dignity of parliament, like another petition which had been offered upon a former occasion. For he was confident the right honourable gentleman who moved for its reception, regarded too much his own dignity, and that of the House, to give his sanction to any thing derogatory from either.

Mr. *O'Neill* then read the whole of the petition, which stated on the part of the petitioners, that their Roman Catholic brethren had had long been, and still are in a degraded situation from numerous restrictive and penal statutes hanging over them; and conscious as the petitioners were, that the prosperity, happiness, and improvement of this country must eventually depend on an union of interests among all religious denominations of the inhabitants. The petitioners therefore prayed, that the House would be pleased to repeal any restrictive statutes at present in existence against the Roman Catholics of Ireland, that they may be thus restored to the rank and consequence of citizens.

Sir *Hercules Langrishe* asked, if the petition came from the corporation of Belfast.

Mr. *O'Neill* answered, no; it was a meeting of the inhabitants convened by public advertisement.

The honourable *Dennis Browne* seconded the motion for the reception of the petition, and thought it was sufficient that the right honourable gentleman who presented it, had stated it was signed by six hundred reputable inhabitants, without requiring the sanction of any corporate body to recommend it to the notice of the House. A former petition on this subject had been rejected, which he thought should have been received also, (a few voices on the treasury side of the House exclaimed, *no, no!*) I say, *yes!* gentlemen may cry, *no, no*—but that is no conviction. I say, Sir, when a right honourable member of high respectability in this country, as well as in this House, presents a petition signed by the names of six hundred of his majesty's subjects, it ought to be received. I know well what has been the consequence of refusals on the part of parliament to hearken to the petitions of the people, and I know what was the consequence of such conduct with regard to America. I therefore cannot think, Sir, that because it has not the sanction of a corporation seal, it should therefore be rejected.

rejected. It has the signatures of six hundred inhabitants, and that is, in my idea, enough to warrant its reception.

Sir *Hercules Langrishe* said, he was sorry to find it of late so frequently necessary to recall the attention of gentlemen to a strict observance of the *orders of parliament*. That they were institutions of great wisdom, and if we were to suffer a neglect of them to grow on our proceedings, we should soon lose both our dignity and authority; that he considered the honourable member's (honourable D. Browne) doctrine about the reception of petitions not exactly conformable to the order of parliament; that when any member presents a petition, it is his duty (let it be subscribed by any person or persons however respectable) to state the *substance and prayer* of it, or to *read* it in his place, if required by any member; and for this reason, when the petition is presented, the Speaker puts the question, whether it shall be received; that the only materials the House had whereby to decide their vote on that question, were the representation of the contents as stated by the member.—That the right of petitioning was too valuable not to be strictly ascertained and precisely known.—That the lowest member of the community was intitled to it, in his *individual capacity*, and as to *collective capacities*, they belonged only to *corporate bodies*, such as we can trace in our charters, or read of in our statute book, not to combinations and societies, self-created and self-incorporated. That, however, the present petition was signed by individuals, inhabitants of Belfast, and as such, he could have no objection to its being received; as to the contents, it was far from his mind to impute to the gentlemen who signed it, any other motive than they professed, or any purpose but the public good. He however could not avoid making some observations on the novelty of the connection, and the singularity of *one class* of men interceding in favour of *another*; and, he observed, whatever favourable intentions might be entertained by the petitioners towards their Catholic brethren, yet, for his part,
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if it was his wish to obstruct the progress of every favour to the Roman Catholics, now depending before parliament; if it was his wish to stop the growth of that conciliation and affection that were arising in our breast; if it was his wish to revive the prejudices that have so long kept us asunder, he would go to Belfast and sign this petition. That the Roman Catholics cannot, more than any other persons in the universe, be supposed so absurd as to entertain a *wish* for the continuance of any restrictions that may affect them, nor did they ever utter so *suspicious* a sentiment; yet they know too well what is due to the authority of the state to dictate to the wisdom of parliament, "They wish for a further repeal of the laws affecting them; but grateful for former concessions, they do not presume to point out the *measure* or *extent* to which such repeal should be carried, but confide in your liberality and benevolence, that it will be as extensive as you shall think prudent and expedient."—This is the language of the constitution, which he hoped would recommend them to the favour of parliament.—He observed, that certainly this petition came before them under some favourable circumstances; it was presented by one of the most respectable men in the nation, and it came unattended by a certain commentary on it, which he had somewhere read, but which he was glad not to read now, because he was apprehensive the House would consider it a *libel on the proceedings of parliament*.

Some voice or other said, Serr, I have some abjekshins to state aginst the recepshin av that petishin—bekays, in my apinyin, Serr, it is an *airy faubrick* and comes standing built upon a *rotten sandy foundaashin*. It comes from a body of min, Serr, who mortyilly hate the Roman *Cathiliks* in their hearts and has no other obbjct in the whole world, Serr, than kicking up of disturbinces—and therefore, Serr, it is an *oald maxim*—

"Teemio Danauze et tela—I mean, *dona ferintes* *."

(A roar of laughter.)

* The old Trojan maxim we presume, but clothed in a new dialect.

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I have very good reasons to believe, *Serr*, that there is no sincerity whatever at the *bottom* of this *petishin* : for I very well remember, *Serr*, when in 78—*petishins* came into this House craving some *relaxashins* in favour of the Roman Cathiliks—not like that now presented which demands of us every thing—which I do not approve, *Serr*,—because he that gives all gives nothing (a roar of laughter) I say, *Serr*, upon that *occazyn* those very men were the foremost to pass resolutions and to instruct their representatives in this House, *Serr*, to oppose the Roman Cathiliks.—But when they saw the old Protestant families of the country, *Serr*, ready to yield indulgences and relaxashins to the Roman Cathiliks—what did they do? Sir—they immediately pretended to become their staunch friends—and by stratagems and frauds, to *debauching* (a loud laugh) and defrauding them.—They built *chopples* for them, *Serr*—they went to *myoss* with us, *Serr*—and all to create disturbance in the country. I refer you to what happened in Dungannon—I refer you to what occurred in 1783 when an unlawful assembly was convened for the pretence of giving the Roman Cathiliks *indulgences*—but the real cause was to form agreements for the support of America, and to create disturbances in this country; from that time to this, *Serr*, they have been endeavouring to debauch the minds of the lower orders of the people, but their debauchery could only reach the lowest description of the mob, *Serr*—in short, *Serr*, every body who knows them, knows them to be a pack whom no king can govern, nor no God can please.

But, *Serr*, what is that *petishin*?—It is to call upon a Protestant parliament to grant what it cannot grant without subverting the constitution.—To that constitution, *Serr*, as established by our *glorified ancestors*, my honour and my *alleagins* are pledged—and I will defend it with my voice in this House, and with the *strength* of my arm out of this House.—And, *Serr*, if every man in this House feels it as I do—it should be kicked out at your door, *Serr*. A Protestant

testant *psaarlimint*, Serr, ought not to receive it—and for my part I am determined to divide the House upon it—and to give it my single negative if no body else does.

Sir *Hercules Langrishe* said, he did not object to receiving the petition; he was only tenacious of parliamentary order.

Mr. *Curran* said, with respect to the object of the petition, something ought to be done for so loyal and respectable a body of subjects; but though much they deserved from the liberality of parliament, that liberality was not to be pushed to the wildest extravagance. It was a subject on which no member could treat with too much deliberation, nor revolve too often in his mind before he speaks to it. He thought that every respectable body of his majesty's subjects had a right to convey their sentiments to parliament, and on this ground he was for receiving the petition. He thought the present a time when a man should be ashamed to sit silent on a subject of so much importance to the constitution and welfare of this country.

Right honourable *J. O'Neill*. At the same time that I present the petition, I do not hold myself bound to support or oppose its principle. I was called upon, as I have said, by a number of persons, many of them my electors: I was not at this meeting; but I consider it as the right of the subject to petition. I have never declared my opinion on the subject to any man—I will reserve to myself the right of forming my opinion after full deliberation; and when I have formed the best opinion I can, I will declare it to the House.

I am extremely thankful for the kind and honourable expressions that gentlemen have been pleased to use towards me; but I assure them, I did not rely upon any favourable reception through their personal regards for me—I took up the petition merely as a point of duty.

The question was put “that the petition be received,” and carried, with Sir Boyle Roche's single negative.

Mr.

Mr. *Curran*, without saying any thing of the principles of the petition, expressed his satisfaction that it had not been rejected, as the House would then have appeared to reject what was in fact a model of as decent, moderate, and respectful appeal to parliament as ever came before that House.

East-India Trade.

Mr. *George Ponsonby*.—Mr. Speaker, I do not know when I rose to address this House on any subject, under more embarrassment than at present—Indeed, exhausted as I am by my professional exertions in another place (the law courts) I feel myself scarcely adequate to so important a subject as that which I shall have the honour this night to propose;—beside, Sir, I observe such a languor and coldness shed over this House during the whole of this session, that I despair of raising it by any feeble exertions of mine, to that degree of warmth which should invigorate its exertions, when the great question of its country's welfare is to be agitated. I could wish, Sir, to address this House when members were warm with a sense of duty to the constitution—and the recollection that the people of Europe await with anxiety the result of a discussion on which rests the right of the people of Ireland to trade with the universe; or whether that right is to be yielded to a company of British monopolists, which has been long since conceded by the British parliament. When Ireland asserted her right to a free trade with the whole world, there was no exception made with regard to India—we might immediately have availed ourselves of the right, and proceed to a commerce with those wealthy nations, had we not meanly precluded ourselves, since, by a clause in a revenue bill, voluntarily depriving us of that right. But now that we are better acquainted with the value of the trade, what prevents us from asserting the right, and exercising the privilege? What is there peculiar in the commencement of the year 1792, that

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should depress the spirits of this House, or shed a languor on its exertions? I hope, Sir, it does not arise from a suspicion of the people or this kingdom—or of the government itself.—I hope this House, Sir, is as capable as ever of asserting the rights, and promoting the interests of Ireland—I could wish to see its members eager for the discussion, and determined to a result honourable to themselves and advantageous to the people they represent.

Sir, in a former session of parliament when a question was brought forward on the rights of this kingdom to a commerce with countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope—we stated the advantage rather from probable conjecture than authentic document—and much under the truth.—But we did not state as we might have done, on the authority of history, that it was a commerce in which all nations of the earth had been at all times eager to participate.—We did not state the specific advantages of the trade itself, because there were then no authentic papers before the House.—But now, Sir, before I proceed, least any thing in my present statement should be doubted, I will read the accounts from the papers just laid on your table, by the authority of government itself.

These returns are for eighteen months, ending at Michaelmas last.

Mr. Ponsonby then read the different items of the return :

Spices of various kinds	-	-	£ 24,800
Mullins and callicoes	-	-	25,000
Bohea tea	-	-	172,657
Green tea	-	-	259,942

There are several other articles, as China, drugs, and groceries of various sorts, of which no return, but a mere guess has been made by the officer; for the fact is, Sir, so ignorant were we of the value of this commerce, that for the value of twenty-four thousand pounds of those commodities there is no head in your custom-house books under which

which to arrange them, but they are merely guessed at in the gross by your officer. Add to this the quantities of contraband goods smuggled in from other European countries, carrying on a trade with those beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and you will be able to form an estimate of what the country pays yearly for East-India commodities.

I declare, Mr. Speaker, I have been often surprised in thinking on this subject, how this House can, session after session, seem so listless and insensible to the importance of this subject, and conjectures have been thereby raised in my mind not the most satisfactory.

I was told in this House, upon a former occasion, that it was an idle thing for the people of this country to think of carrying on a trade with India for want of a great capital, and it was said at the same time, that it was an ungenerous thing to attempt it, because it would injure England. I have endeavoured to reconcile these positions in my own mind, but readily found it impossible.

I remember to have been told also, that India was the great source of revenue on which the prosperity of Great Britain depended. However, Sir, the recent conduct of the British minister has given the lie to that assertion; for he has seen them immersed in a ruinous and expensive war, which has absorbed all their revenue, and so far from placing any reliance on their support, you see him telling the people of England they pay four hundred thousand pounds of taxes more than he wants, and restoring them to the people. Therefore, Sir, I suppose we have been grossly misinformed on this point.

We have greater necessity this night for carrying this motion than we ever had before, because the time nearly approaches when the British minister will renew his bargain with the India Company; and if no remonstrance is made on the part of Ireland, he will say to them "what you have had you shall have again. Ireland had an opportunity of asserting her claims, but did not; therefore you shall now

bargain for a monopoly of the trade both of Great Britain and Ireland."

Now, Sir, what honest reason can be assigned for Ireland foregoing her claims?—Will the commerce of England suffer by it? NO!—Will the wealth of England suffer? NO!—And if it did, Sir, is it our consideration.—Are WE, the representatives of England?—No, Sir, we are the representatives of the people of Ireland, and it is beneath both our dignity and our duty to consider any other interest than theirs.

I do not recollect in the year 1782, that any such regulation was made or even asked on the part of Great Britain, but I do very well remember in the year 1785, that his Majesty, in his speech to the British parliament, stated that he had not been able finally to arrange the commerce between England and Ireland, and I also remember the answer of the British House of Commons in their address to the crown, "*We are sorry any jealousies on the part of Ireland should arise to prevent the final arrangement of that commerce, or suggest a suspicion of intention on the part of Great Britain to infringe those privileges which we should as jealously protect as our own.*"—And therefore, Sir, I do not believe the parliament of England ever meant to set up any sort of opposition to our claims.

As to the business of any settlement beyond the Cape, belonging to the India Company, I should no more think of trading to them than of meddling with the trade of any other European settlement in India. If the English have settlements at Madras and Bengal, so have the French at Pondicherry, the Danes at Tranquebar, the Dutch in the Spice-islands, and yet these settlements never presume to lay any exclusive claim to a trade with the vast empires of China, Japan, and other countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope; compared with which these kingdoms are but spots on the globe.

Mr. Speaker, if this House should refuse to interfere, and repeal those laws which affect our concerns with regard to
India

India, I do very much apprehend impressions on the minds of the People, very unfavourable to parliament.

Is there any thing alarming in the state of this kingdom? Have any new notions or maxims of government been propagated in this country, and attended to by any great portion of the people? I know there have, Sir, and depend upon it, such doctrines are never so likely to gain proselytes as where the people see a Protestant House of Commons deserting their rights.

Government is an institution designed for the happiness of the people, and therefore in all countries where men are brave and informed, the security of the government is in proportion to the happiness of the people. There is no instance in any country where a wise government was constituted, where the people ever deserted that government, until it first deserted the cause of their happiness and prosperity. And therefore, Sir, whatever may be alarming in the circumstances of this country, calls upon this House with a louder voice than I can, not to prostrate the commerce of Ireland at the foot of a British minister, or of a chairman to an India Company.

England may grant to her own merchants a monopoly in the trade of all goods brought from beyond the Cape of Good Hope: but what right has England to bank-in the trade of Ireland, or to say the port of London is to import for the kingdom of Ireland? Let London be the port for England if she will, but let Dublin be the port for Ireland. On what principle of policy can you surrender the right without any kind of compact? Is it mere complaisance to the people of England, of whom not one in one thousand knows you have any right to withhold it, or feels himself at all obliged by the surrender. That spot of ground called England, has long been in possession of this monopoly, both for herself and the spot of ground called Ireland. She has never felt any interruption in this monopoly, and therefore she will never even thank us for that of
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our right to withhold *which*, she is insensible. Who then do you wish to oblige? I'll tell you—THE EXISTING ADMINISTRATION!—To gratify the present minister, and to enable him to make a good bargain for himself and the India Company, of whom he is the agent. 'Tis for THIS you surrender the rights and abandon the claims of the people of Ireland.

If an English member of parliament sat in this House, the most he could say would be, "The India Company form a principal source of revenue to the British minister; they have long held an exclusive monopoly, by which they have acquired wealth and territory, and therefore I hope you will not now interfere with their interests by asserting your own privileges." But if an Irish member were to reply, he would say this—"If the India Company have amassed wealth by their exclusive monopoly, I am glad of it, but they have held it long enough, and should now allow us to derive some benefit from the source whence they have long drawn exclusive advantage."

It may be said, Sir, that all European nations have carried on this trade by exclusive companies;—but this is no reason why Ireland should not be admitted to it on a similar principle; or why the commodities of Ireland should not go as far as those of England or any other nation of Europe; they may not be at present perhaps so numerous, or in such perfection, but there cannot be a doubt that the trade itself would excite emulation, and its profits enable us to attain perfection. The more I reflect on the probable advantages of a trade with the nations beyond the Cape, the less it becomes possible for me to suppose this House would *sink so low* as not to INSIST on the *exercise* as well as the *right* to that trade; for the right without the exercise is a ridiculous absurdity. At present you give England every profit both of direct and circuitous trade. Your ships or your merchandizes have no share in the traffic.—First, England benefits by the direct conveyance from India into the port
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of London, and from thence circuitously into your own ports—and thus not only the direct freight from India—but the profits of the British merchant and broker—with the circuitous conveyance hither, and afterwards the profits of the retailer must be paid by the Irish consumer.

And now, Mr. Speaker—are the members of this House prepared to surrender up the right of this country in an important trade with one-fourth of the universe, to a company of British monopolists? They had better think before they do it. Will any minister have the confidence to deny the final settlement of the right of this country to trade with all the world. If you desire the respect of England, respect yourselves. The more zealously you support your own rights, the more worthy will you shew yourselves of her connection. A free nation can never regard a race of slaves.—I would not have this country stand in the degradation of begging as alms from a British minister that which she can insist on as a right.—I am as ready, Sir, to acts of national generosity as any man, but I am not prepared to creep on my knees to the chairman of an East-India Company, and say, “Pray, Sir, accept a surrender of the commerce of my country, and the rights of my constituents.” And therefore, Sir, I shall move you, “That leave be given to bring in a bill for the repeal of any law existing in this kingdom restrictive on the trade of Ireland to countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope.”

Chancellor of the Exchequer. I must adopt a different mode from that of the honourable gentleman, and instead of calling for unusual warmth, I shall call for unusual deliberation, for I never knew unusual warmth arise that it did not produce unusual inconvenience.

I submit whether this bill be an asserting of our rights or not—there is no law that I know of, that prevents us from trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope for any article but tea, and that article by your own revenue law, is directed to be had through the medium of England. If this be fact,
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the matter of right is already ascertained in our favour, and the question is narrowed to a mere question of commerce and of expediency.

The first statement of the honourable gentleman was, that we had argued that we could not carry on the India trade, not having capital, and that if we did carry it on, we would injure England. I do not know who it was that argued thus; but sure I am they argued justly, for by an impotent attempt to carry on this trade without sufficient capital, we might do ourselves no actual good, but do England much positive harm; the truth is, that every country that ever attempted this trade has failed or is declining. Nothing but the territorial revenue by which England makes her investments homeward, could support the enormous expence of this trade. What are the exports of England? Commodities we do not possess, silver, tin, copper, woollen-cloth; and yet not possessing these, we are to go to India, and against all the advantages England possesses, beat her out of the market. England has another and a very considerable advantage which we could not enjoy—a trade to China in various commodities, the growth of the East; amongst these opium and cotton are of principal value; these she exports to China in aid of the metals with which principally she purchases her tea, and these produce her immense profit.

Now, Sir, I do not offer these arguments to induce you to relinquish the trade, but as reasons why you should pursue it with less zeal. What you do by your own authority confirms your rights; if the country was to speak in its pride, it would say, "England holds this trade at our pleasure—to us it must look for its continuance." For, Sir, at this day the world is not so ignorant as not to know, that our refraining from this trade is our own concession; and if so, they never can think that any kind of voluntary concession can diminish a right.

It seems to be the opinion of gentlemen, that no concession can be made without relinquishing dignity and independence.—

pendence.—What, Sir, does England relinquish independence and dignity, when she concedes to us the monopoly of her market for our linens, or does she lay herself at our feet?

If I was to say that the Emperor of Germany was a dependant upon England, should I not be guilty of great folly? And yet the Emperor Charles, by treaty with England, relinquished for ever the right of trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope; and what was his motive? A motive, that at this day ought to have weight in this House—to *pluck up and to eradicate for ever every root of division and disunion*. And surely, if the allies of England found it necessary to make such a concession for the reasons assigned, we, who are connected with England by blood, by affection and interest—we, the safety of whose constitution in church and state depends upon that connection, will not think it hard to forbear the exercise of a right undenied, undoubted by any man; but which, if exercised, might do us little good, but our best and dearest friend very great harm. England certainly is our best friend, and the connection we have with her will support the constitution of this country against every clamorous incendiary that would attempt to shake it.

England is not only our best friend politically, but she is our best friend commercially; her markets are the best markets for the produce of our agriculture and manufacture: The balance of trade, which is so much in our favour, demonstrates this: Why then should we enter upon fruitless projects to injure England and favour her rivals?

It is an argument much relied on, that the East-India Company are about to advance a sum of money for the renewal of their charter, and we are advised to claim a share of the spoil. But if the company should not be able to do this, how are we to act? The company owes seven millions sterling; the company is now carrying on an expensive war; how then can they pay this expected sum of money? The probability is, that the burden will be thrown upon the

English nation, and I do not think those gentlemen very much our friends who advise us to go share in a loss.

Sir, I have already stated my reasons for thinking that no country can carry on this East-India trade in competition with England. I know it may be urged that the Danes did carry it on for a time, and successfully; but let it be recollected, that was in time of war, when the Company's servants wished to send home their fortunes to Europe. These they invested in goods which were put on board Danish vessels, taking bills at a long date on Europe for the amount: The Danes carried those goods to China; there bought teas, carried them to Europe, sold them for cash, and by the time their bills came due were in a condition to pay them: but as soon as this business was discovered, it was stopped by the Company, who found another way for their servants to remit their property to Europe: and ever since the Danish Company has declined.

It was also said that America had established a trade to India: I understand that trade has failed, or is much declining.—The truth is, that the inhabitants of India will not receive the productions of manufactures brought to them by strangers;—their prejudice—their religion is against it.

In acting as we have done, we do no more than England does for Portugal, when she concedes a decided preference for the wines of that country; or than Portugal does when she concedes a decided preference for the manufactures of Ireland. If England should in her conduct towards us, treat us unjustly, we have the remedy in our hands; but England is too wise and too honest a nation for us to fear such conduct. They know that if one of these kingdoms is enslaved, the other will not long remain free. When England gave our linens a decided preference, she did not think her rights were injured; when she gave our corn a decided preference, she did not think she surrendered a right. Let us meet her then with an emulation of liberality, an emulation

emulation of friendship that will strengthen the right of both.

The honourable Mr. *Steward* said, that a motion had been brought forward in the last session of parliament, by his honourable friend on this subject; the object of that motion was inquiry—he wished for information on a subject so important, and therefore gave it his concurrence.—The House thought fit to negative the motion. He imagined the present would not have better success, thinking it impossible that the House could proceed to repeal what they so lately refused to inquire into.

In the course of the former debate, he had expressed his doubts of the propriety of repealing the clauses in question. Reflection had by no means dispelled those doubts, and he was now less inclined to withdraw the monopoly from England than when the subject was last agitated.

He considered it then, as he did now, ridiculous to argue, that Ireland was unsuited to the trade; or that the trade was in its nature pernicious to the country carrying it on. To say that Ireland had not capital to engage in it, was little to the purpose. If Ireland had demand for Asiatic articles, if the commerce was permitted, foreign capitals ever ready to fly where profit can be made, would flow in, and the trade would be profitable as surely as individuals could undersell monopolies in competition. It was her fitness for the trade, it was his conviction that British capital would avail itself of Irish rights to wound Britain herself, that determined him to forego one advantage rather than be guilty of ingratitude. He never would suffer the rights of Ireland to seduce and drain from Britain that vital principle which upheld her greatness, and enabled her to support her burdens. Nor would he ever lend the rights of Ireland to British merchants as a cloak for fraud and injustice.

Ireland was rapidly advancing in riches. Her commerce was extending itself every day, and thriving under the wings of the British navy. The friendship of Ireland as a nation

was too important, to make the reflection in the least degrading, that her prosperity as a country depended on her connection with England. The fate of Britain was little less involved in hers. Great Britain was at present struggling against a debt incurred in defence of colonies, the advantages of which this country shared. Her navy was an expence of two millions annually, which watches equally over the Irish as the British flag. When the value of the protection received was compared with what Ireland directly contributed to the support of the empire, an inference almost followed, impeaching her of ingratitude.

The Clauses which his honourable friend wished to repeal, rescued Ireland from the imputation. He considered it as a tribute of affection, equal in amount to the excess of price paid the India Company for the teas consumed in Ireland, above what they could be imported for in Irish ships from China. He considered it as a contribution to the empire, applied, in the most efficacious manner, as going immediately to the support of a chartered company to whom Britain had entrusted the government of her vast empire in the East. This chartered Company was at present in war, engaged in an important and as yet an undecided war, against one of the most formidable opponents of the British interest in India: upon its success the fate of these possessions depended. Was this the moment to withdraw assistance, to add to their embarrassments, or to weaken their exertions? The article of tea was one of their principal sources of profit. If Ireland withdrew her consumption, it would increase their difficulties; it might drive them to bankruptcy; discharge their debt upon Great Britain; wound the credit of a country in which that of Ireland was involved; and compel England, however inconsistent it might be with her policy, to assume the territorial revenue and civil government of that empire, rather than let it perish in the hands of distressed merchants.

When he considered the two islands, distant only a few leagues from each other; the one importing East-India produce,

produce, by means of a monopoly; the other by individual merchants; it was evident that where the monopoly did exist, there the articles would be cheapest. That the nation rejecting the monopoly, adopted a policy not merely defensive, but offensive; it was in vain to imagine that the importation would be confined to the consumption of Ireland. Ireland to her disgrace, would be made an emporium for English capital to smuggle tea into Great Britain: It might be said, it was her business to guard against that; he disapproved the answer as unkind, determined never to act by the idea that either the commercial or political prosperity of Ireland could be distinct or opposed to that of Britain.

He said, he could not, however, approve of the mode in which Ireland at present received the tea she consumed. The charter of the India Company, was on the point of expiring; he hoped it might be renewed on other and better principles, but on this part of the subject he spoke with great diffidence from his ignorance of commerce. At present all the produce of the East was imported directly into the port of London; from whence it circulated and was consumed, charged with the expence of carriage to the most remote parts of the empire; it required, in his opinion, some strong collateral reason to justify this circuitous mode of receiving the commodity—the India Company were not benefited by it—none of the increased expence went into their pockets, on the contrary, it wounded their interest—it raised the price to the consumer. The increase of price, decreased consumption, and decrease of consumption, decreased their profit. It did not tend to prevent smuggling in preference to other arrangements; the same precautions which conduct the India ships to the custom-house of London, would conduct them to his majesty's officers in the out-ports; were the trade distributed amongst the principal harbours in the empire, it would save many of their ships a dangerous navigation which has proved fatal to several. He

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was aware of the opposition any argument would meet from the Board of Directors, which might tend to diminish their patronage in the port of London; but he knew that the minister of England had abilities and fortitude to struggle against the private views of particular classes of men, when by so doing he could serve the empire at large.

Let the Company, upon the renewal of their charter, be bound to settle a portion of their trade equivalent to the consumption of this country in one, two, or three of the principal harbours. Let them have agents and stores here; let them fit out their ships with Irish commodities, Irish sailors, and Irish provisions. Then the subjects of Ireland will stand precisely on the same footing as the unchartered subjects of Great Britain. They would consume the commodity as cheap, relieved from the expence of re-exportation, the country would receive the benefit of that capital circulating in it, individuals might become proprietors by purchasing stock, and Ireland would mark her attachment to Great Britain by yielding to the principal of monopoly as long as it was her policy to continue it. The India Company could not suffer from the arrangement, their profits would increase with the increased consumption; the metropolis of England, grown infinitely too unwieldy from the national debt and its vast commerce, would be relieved by it, circulation would be propelled to the extremities of the empire, only to return to the heart with increased vigour. The trifling revenue which Britain might lose by parting with the duty not drawn back upon the re-export of the article, Ireland would not hesitate to repay. As long as the policy of England was liberal, he was convinced an Irish parliament would ever be generous.

He concluded, by saying, that prejudiced as he must ever feel in favour of any motion brought forward by his honourable friend, he could not vote with him on the present occasion; he was decidedly of opinion that the contribution should not be withdrawn unless an equivalent was given; that

that his mind could not suggest an equivalent, which, with so little national impoverishment to Ireland, advantaged Great Britain so much; he was inclined to think, Irish capital had at present channels enough in which to employ itself, where the returns were more frequent, and he considered the monopoly as a tax, not oppressive in its nature, falling altogether on the wealthy, and not in the least wounding the poor; but were even his mind less made up than it was upon what should be the conduct of Ireland towards Great Britain on the present subject, generosity would lead him to choose another moment for abandoning the Company than when the British empire in the East was at stake.

Mr. *Stephen Moore* said, that notwithstanding the professions of the honourable gentleman, that he would bring forward something new on the subject of the India trade, or at least place his arguments in a new point of light; he had not been able to discover any difference between the gentleman's speech of the present and of the last session; the ground was precisely the same; the arguments had not even the merit of novelty to recommend them; and yet the House was called upon to correct its own work without having been shewn that that work was erroneous.

If every member in the House had not been previously well convinced of the right of Ireland to trade wherever she thought fit, no one would ever be able to discover it from the speech of the honourable member; but no man denies the right—the question of expedience is the only question before the House; and before we embark in this trade, we should consider whether it is likely to be advantageous or not—I am not one who will say, that Ireland is incapable of pursuing this trade to advantage—or that if at present it may not be perfectly convenient, the day may not soon arrive when it will be advantageous; but I will say we have it always in our power, whenever it does become expedient; for the right is not denied by any man; and the growing
prosperity

prosperity of this country is such, that the time of engaging in distant and extensive commerce approaches rapidly; but the more strongly we adhere to Great Britain, the more we accelerate our own prosperity; every motion that can alarm or irritate either country against the other, should be carefully avoided by the true friends of both.

To provoke and exasperate the two nations by experiments, or encreasing the warmth of their tempers, is no mode of mine; it may entertain, nay, it may astonish the lookers on, but it is a trick too dangerous for my amusement.

I am against this motion, because it engages us beyond our present strength; because, at this time it may create misunderstanding between the two nations; and because it is unnecessary to assert a right which no man denies.

Sir *Boyle Roache* opposed the motion, and Mr. *Vandeleur* supported it.

Mr. *Perry* would not waste the time of the House by entering into the question of right which was acknowledged on all hands—nor into the advantages that would result from the trade which he believed would be great and many, but he would confine himself to what fell from the honourable gentleman who introduced the motion—and who asked whether we wish to oblige the people of England?—He would answer, yes—We wish to oblige the people of England for the preference they give us in the corn trade—for the monopoly they give us of the linen trade—for the protection which they afford our coasts by a fleet to which we contribute not a single shilling—and above all, for that close connection which we enjoy with that people, and which he hoped would put to silence faction, turbulence, and sedition.

Honourable *Dennis Browne* said, the question was narrowed to the expediency of the measure proposed.—If the question was on the RIGHT of the people of Ireland, he would consider himself the representative of the people of Ireland,

Ireland, and himself an Irishman, and would assert that right—but the question was merely, whether it was necessary to the commercial or constitutional interests of the country to exercise this right?—He thought not—The trade to China consisted of an export of metals, which, though it had been confidently asserted we could procure them from other countries—we had not yet procured; therefore in his opinion the country was not in a situation to benefit by the trade to China; nor did he consider that by postponing the exercise of this trade we gave up the right of it; he would therefore vote against the motion.

Mr. *Graydon*—could not help animadverting on some positions advanced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had said that this commerce was ruinous to every country that had engaged in it, except Britain. Now he would assert, that so far from being ruinous, it was the most beneficial commerce of all others that this day existed on the face of the globe. He would not, however, rest on assertion, but produce documents. Perhaps the right honourable Bart. notwithstanding his high official situation, did not know, that the East-India Company had been told by the whole commercial interest of England, that they were ruining the trade of the country by monopolizing the most lucrative branch of it. Mr. Graydon then read an extract from a report of the committee of English merchants which contained this opinion. The India Company, he said, had adopted the position of the right honourable gentleman, and endeavoured to inculcate it—that the trade to the East, was a losing trade. The English merchants, however, were of a different opinion, as appeared by another extract which he read from the report of the committee, to this effect—“ We have not heard of any such ruin—but, we have heard that FORTY-FIVE ships have lately sailed from America for China—and SEVENTEEN from Ostend; and we cannot think so many mercantile men so unintelligent in their af-

fairs as to undertake so long and expensive a voyage, without strong probability of profit."

Another position of the right honourable Baronet was, that the exports to India were principally in bullion—This, he thought was a position that should be attentively considered, and fully ascertained—for the great benefit that must arise from the India trade, if any, is the export of native manufactures—He then begged leave to read another document, which was an entry of the exports of the India Company on the 14th of January, 1792, and which enumerated a great variety of articles of manufactures—in some of these he allowed Great Britain excelled us, and therefore would continue in possession of the India market with respect to these—but in others we were superior to her, and in others, both countries were on a footing of equality.—The export on flannels, poplins, light stuffs, linen, and wrought leather, which are among the articles of Eastern commerce, he thought would be highly beneficial to this country.

The Ostend vessels, he said, were freighted by British capital—a convincing proof of the very advantageous nature of that trade to individuals. If the country was determined to give up this most lucrative commerce to England—at least let it be done with her eyes open—let it be known that we are aware of its value.

Another circumstance to which he would call the attention of the House, was, that the British merchants have entered into treaty with the Minister, who had told them nearly the terms on which he intended to settle with the India Company—one of which was, that the Company were still to enjoy the monopoly, with this limitation, that government should have a power of granting licenses to individuals to engage in the trade. Should this agreement take place—and there could be little doubt but it would—to what a degrading situation will this country then be reduced?

duced? To avoid that degrading situation, the measure proposed by the motion was the only means—it should therefore meet his hearty assent.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* repeated what he had said—that there was no export of manufactures to India, except a few insignificant articles for the use of the Company's factories. As to the rest of the honourable gentleman's, it consists of the hearsay information — against which he would oppose his assertion.

Mr. *Browne* [College] confined himself principally to answering the arguments offered against the bill by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He observed, that his arguments coincide with those which in general had been offered, viz. that the trade to Asia was impracticable, impolitic, and unfriendly to England. The first objection again divided itself into assertions, that we had no capital, that we had no materials for export, to which had been added on a former night, that England would seize our ships, and try our mariners at the bar of Westminster-hall. This last rash objection, however, had not been brought forward this night; and when it was, in a former session, some gentlemen even on the government side of the House, were ashamed of the irritating threat, and reprobated the production of it.

The want of capital was answered by saying, the sale of the commodities to be imported was sure, and the profit certain. It was answered also by saying, that capital would flow in from England; and the truth of the answer was acknowledged by government; and as to manufactures and produce for export it has been fully answered by his honourable friend [Mr. Graydon] who had shewn that England had exported to China much besides bullion, and much of those things which we had, and had in greater perfection.

With respect to the monopoly, he knew the merchant, particularly in the North, was desirous of the trade, and he wished ministers would not be so very affectedly tender of the merchant, who did not ask their advice, but leave it free to the commercial world to act as they thought fit, and not pretend to protect their interests against their will. It was absurd to suppose they would pursue the trade if they found it pernicious. But he asked how this accorded with the objection that it was impracticable? Could an impossible trade be pernicious? He left it to gentlemen to reconcile these positions. As to the system being unfriendly to England he found he had, if government were right, mistaken the meaning of our having a free trade and constitution. He had not then supposed that it was to be a mere name, and that whatever we wanted to encrease, we should be told it was impolite or unfriendly to England. He admitted that the two nations were mutually to concede to each other, but he had not understood the concession was to be all on one side, viz. on the side of Ireland, that she was always to surrender her right without getting any thing in return, or being thanked for the surrender.

He then adverted to the silly boast that we had a right to trade to the East if we were never to exercise that right. He could not conceive any thing more childish than a right never to be exercised—It was, in fact, no right at all, for it was a virtual relinquishment; it was the boast of a child, or of a slave, affecting to put a restraint upon himself which had in fact been previously imposed by others. The relinquishments cited by a right honourable gentleman, had nothing in them similar, nor the preferences given by certain states to others. The relinquishments were compulsory, such as the Emperor's—of the East-India trade, and the preferences were not without compensation, such as the preference given to our linens in England, which was compensated by our almost total dereliction of the woollen trade, which might have afforded us a great article
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of export to India; nor was the Emperor in the instance before alluded to without vast compensation by the treaty of Vienna.

It had been objected, that we should change our monopolists, and to give Sweden and Denmark what we wish to deny to England. This proved in the first place, that poor countries can carry on the trade; such are Sweden and Denmark in an eminent degree. And as to the objection, it could easily be obviated in framing the revenue bill, by giving England a preference to them, at the same time that we opened the trade to ourselves that any man of common sense could see its futility.

It was said that territory and territorial revenue was necessary to this trade, and without those it would be a losing trade to England. Sir Thomas Roe, the first founder of the Indian trade, thought otherwise; he had prophesied, that if they ever attempted to get territory it would be their ruin. Many gentlemen thought the prophecy was true, and that it would be the ruin of the Company, if not the ruin of England; it became a losing trade, on account of the Company's expensive wars, and then they were obliged to try to compensate the loss they occasioned themselves, by new acquisition of territory, for the present repaying them, but leading to new wars and new losses.

He concluded by making a variety of observations on what had fallen from different gentlemen, particularly on the assertion that the wish for this trade shewed a restless spirit: he said he never before had heard a restless spirit condemned in commerce: it was its nature to be always in motion, it could not otherwise be in health, and for his part he wished to see it in eternal progression.

In the course of his speech he observed it had been said, that the American trade to China had failed; he corresponded with that country, and often saw their public papers; he denied the fact; he assured the House that at this moment India goods were cheaper even in the back settlements

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of America than in any part of this kingdom; he reminded the House he had in the last session asserted there had been forty American ships in the river of Canton; he was laughed at for the assertion; it had appeared this night, by the testimony of the first London merchants, produced by Mr. Graydon, that the assertion was true; he therefore hoped they would give him more credit now: and indeed the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to admit the fact.

Mr. O'Connor. I will not take up the time of the House in arguing this as a constitutional question, or as a matter of contention between this country and Great Britain, but shall confine myself to consider it as a temporary commercial restriction, which if for the interest of Ireland, should be continued; if not, it should cease to be re-enacted. To discuss this question fairly, we should consider how the capital of Ireland is at present employed, and by contrasting the advantages which it derives from the ways in which it is now managed, with the benefits we should receive from embarking it in an East-India trade, we shall see the question in its true light. At present, Sir, our capital is employed in agriculture, in manufacture, in our home trade, and in near foreign trades of quick return. Is it from our agriculture the honourable mover would have us withdraw our capital to place it in an East-India trade? If we did, we should withdraw it from the most lucrative way in which a capital can be engaged; or is it from our manufactures we are to withdraw our capital to place it in an East-India trade? If we do, we shall withdraw it from the most profitable employment, next to agriculture, a capital can be engaged in; nor indeed can any trade be carried on, unless agriculture and manufactures are made our first objects. Is it from our home trade we are to withdraw our capital to place it in a foreign trade, and that the most distant foreign trade? If we do, we shall differ in policy from every wise nation under heaven; for besides many other advantages,

vantages, in every operation of a home trade, each exchange is made between articles the produce of home labour, whereby our industry is doubly excited ; whereas no foreign trade goes farther than to exchange articles the produce of home labour, for articles the produce of foreign industry : or are we to withdraw our capital from our near foreign trades of quick return, to place it in a remote, circuitous, hazardous trade to the East Indies, at a time when our capital is scanty and insufficient ? Yet, Sir, these are the only ways in which a capital can possibly be engaged, if you except the *carrying* trade, which is quite out of the question ; and I call on the gentlemen at the opposite side of the House, who, session after session have held out such advantages to this country from an East-India trade, to inform us from which of those four branches in which our capital is at present employed, they would recommend to us to withdraw a shilling to place it in that most distant foreign trade to the East Indies. It is evident that to encrease the wealth of a nation most speedily, you should employ it in the most profitable ways, and it will not be denied by any one who pretends to a knowledge of commercial principles, that agriculture, manufactures, a home trade, and near foreign trades, are infinitely more lucrative ways of employing capital than sending it on that most distant trade to China, which should never be undertaken by any country until it had a superabundance. Is it in her agriculture she has capital to spare ? Or in her manufactures ? Or in her home trade ? And is she not surpassed in her near foreign trades of quick return, for want of capital, by her more wealthy neighbours ? Is it therefore she should attempt to rival them in the most distant foreign trade ; it is erroneous, preposterous ; and I am supported in my assertions, by one of the ablest commercial writers that ever wrote, who after assigning the overflowing of Dutch capital in these most lucrative branches, as a good reason for that country engaging in an East-India trade, says of Denmark and Sweden what

is more applicable to this country, "Better for them," says he, "in their present circumstances, to buy India goods from some other nation, even though they should pay somewhat dearer, than to embark their capitals in so very distant a trade in which their returns are so very slow, in which capital can maintain so small a quantity of productive labour at home, when productive labour is so much wanted, when so little is done, and so much is to do." These, Sir, are the words of a man under whose authority no Government under heaven need be afraid to shelter its acts. An honourable gentleman has said, that Irish merchants are ready to declare their willingness to embark their capitals in an East-India trade. If the interest of merchants and the interest of the country they trade from is the same, the intelligence should have weight, but unfortunately they are often at variance, and in no case more so than the present. Nor is the question whether our merchants are willing to engage in this East India trade; but the question is, whether it is for the interest of Ireland to pursue the trade. But I will suppose an Irish capital embarked in the East-India trade; for instance, a sum equal to that which the honourable mover has stated the sum to be now engaged in the purchase of India goods (about 350,000l.) and I will ask what fund shall supply its place in paying the wages of the labourers, artisans, and manufacturers, until return can be had from India, which cannot be sooner than two or three years? There is no such fund: you can pass no act of parliament that will create money: wherefore the public would go unemployed, by which means you would have your streets crowded with manufacturers stimulated by want, and made desperate by famine, with no other consolation in their wretchedness and misery than its having been occasioned by a mistake of our patriots. It has been said, Sir, we can trade to India with English money, in which case it would have to contend with British capital: here would be British merchants against British merchants;

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on the one hand, they would be destitute of territory in this distant country they would trade to; on the other hand they would possess it with all the advantages of merchants and sovereigns; on the one hand, they would have to purchase bullion, furs, and the other articles in demand in China with Irish manufactures; on the other hand, they would have to purchase them with British manufactures. Are the Irish as cheap and as good as the British? I am sorry as man can be, to say that the quantity of British goods consumed in this country, gives but too sure a proof of our inferiority. Here then is a speculation founded upon disadvantages, founded upon the supposition of ignorance and folly in British merchants. I ask pardon for having trespassed so long on the time of the House, nor should I have done so, had not this subject been made a leading feature in the charges against the present administration; and that the nation may see what credit should be given to the rest of the catalogue from the insignificance of this; and convinced as I am of the bad consequence which would follow our repealing the clause in question, I have too good an opinion of the abilities of gentlemen at the opposite side of the House, to suspect them of agitating it for any speculative advantages it holds out to this country; but notwithstanding its defects, I am far from thinking it disqualified from being a fit subject for popular incitement. There *must* be *wealth* in the case, for *India* is concerned; there *must* be *oppression*, for there is *restraint*.

Sir Laurence Parsons.—I should not rise to intrude upon the time of this House at so late an hour, did I not think it would ill become me, who have been in the habit of delivering my sentiments here, to give a silent vote upon such a subject, the first time I am going to decide upon it. I am not connected with either party, but my declaration always has been, that where I thought the government right, it should have my support; where wrong, my opposition.

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The present is a subject of much difficulty and great extent. If, therefore, I err in fact or inference, I wish to be corrected, and set right. I am not bound to my present opinion; it shall freely give way to superior knowledge and superior reasoning.

In the year 1779, the Free Trade was voted. From that time till the year 1791, being a period of 12 years, neither the honourable member, who introduced this subject, nor the right honourable member who seconded him, and who now state the want of an East-India trade as so great a grievance, ever made one motion or uttered a syllable upon it in this House. If then, they were so many years before they could satisfy themselves, that the want of this trade was a grievance; I trust it will not be thought extraordinary, if I happen not to be satisfied that it is so even yet. In the year 1783, in Lord Northington's administration, a motion was made upon this subject, by an honourable member, now in office; *both these gentlemen were silent*. In the year 1786, the subject was revived again by the same member, and *both these gentlemen were again silent*. Willing to put the most liberal interpretation upon every man's conduct, I ascribe theirs to a want of conviction at that time of the expediency of this trade; and I only mention it now, that a liberal interpretation may be extended to my conduct upon the present occasion. I shall, therefore, proceed to state simply and briefly the reasons which govern my judgment upon this subject.

Our right to trade to the East being acknowledged, the question is simplified. But the honourable member would wish to confound the right with the exercise, and says if you have not the exercise, what avails the right? This would be just, if we agreed to an *eternal* relinquishment of the exercise; but agreeing only to a *temporary* relinquishment, it is not just. It does not follow, that if the trade is inexpedient *now*, that it will be *always* inexpedient; or that if we forego for the present, the exercise, that we are
never

never to assume it. The infancy of a state is like the infancy of man; what would be a poison to us in our childhood, might be a medicine to us in our maturity; and such I take to be the truth with respect to this trade. For my part, I think the right and the exercise so distinguished, that though I now contend against the exercise, I would also contend against the dereliction of the right to the last drop of blood that flows through my veins. I shall further simplify the subject, by confining my observations to the trade with China; as I believe it is admitted, that a trade with any other part of Asia would not be an object now. The common objection to a trade with China is, that it must be carried on by an export of silver, and would therefore be a subtraction from our capital, which might be better employed at home. To obviate this it has been stated, that Ireland might export manufactures to Spain; dispose of them there for silver, and afterwards send that silver to China to purchase tea. Now, grant that we could do so, and then I say, that it would be better to employ that silver at home, than send it round the Cape of Good Hope to China. And why? because we have not a capital at home, adequate to the opportunity of home employment. The great disadvantage which now retards the growing prosperity of this country, is the smallness of its capital. This every man must admit. Consequently, whatever would take from our present capital would be bad, whatever would add to it would be good. If a trade with China would require an export of a part of our capital, which cannot be denied, it would be so far bad. If a trade with Spain would supply us with silver in return for our manufactures, it would add to our capital, and be so far good. But if we were to export that silver again to China to purchase teas, we should lose the benefit at home of that increase of capital.

An honourable member has enumerated different articles of manufacture to a considerable amount, which are export-

ed by the East-India Company to Asia. But these are almost entirely for the British settlements there, not for China. The Chinese are too proud or too politic to use any manufactures but their own. But to put it beyond all doubt, that a trade with China cannot be carried on but by an export of silver, not by manufactures; I say, that if *we* could carry it on by an export of manufactures, *England* could carry it on so, and to better advantage, because she can undersell us in almost every manufacture. And then I say that if England do so, *she* would, because it would be her interest. Now, what is the fact? England exports every year to China, from six to *seven hundred thousand pounds* in silver. What follows? That she could not carry on the trade but by an export of silver. And what follows undeniably from this? That we could not carry it on but by an export of silver; that is, by a subtraction from our capital here, which might be so much better employed at home, in home trade and home manufacture. What trade is the best for a nation that has but small capital, and great capacity like Ireland? First, I say, that which exports manufactures and brings back money. That is clear. Next, that which exchanges manufacture for manufacture.—But the worst trade is, that which requires an export of money, and a return of manufacture. Such is the trade with China. Again, that is the best trade which gives the quickest return. This no man can deny.—What then is the worst? That which gives the slowest return; and what return can be much slower than that which requires a navigation equal to the circumference of the globe. Such is the trade with China.—It is not then a trade of manufacture for money; nor even of manufacture for manufacture; nor yet, even a trade of expeditious return, but a trade which requires an export of money, and a return of manufacture; and that too the slowest possible return: that is, it is the worst trade for this country, circumstanced as it is, which the mind of man can conceive.

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In confirmation of what I have said, I must mention an author, which I am particularly induced to do, because the honourable member, who introduced this subject, said upon a former occasion, that he considered him as the *first political writer of the age*; it is Mr. Adam Smith. He is of opinion that it would be better for a country of small capital, "to buy for some time, even at a *higher price*, from "other European nations, the East-India goods it has occasion for, than to import them itself directly from the "East-Indies. What it might lose by the high price of "those goods, he says, would seldom be equal to the loss "which it would sustain by the *distraction of a large portion* "of its capital from other employments, more necessary, or "more useful, or more suitable to its circumstances and "situation, than a direct trade to the East-Indies." You have then the opinion of the first political writer of the age, according to the opinion of the honourable member, and that too upon the subject to which his whole life was dedicated; and that not delivered in the heat of party disputes, to favour one side, and annoy the other, but the calm result of his reason, dictated in the closet. This then I say is an opinion which ought to have much weight with every man, but especially with the honourable member who estimates him so eminently.

But another idea has been suggested, that if this trade is thrown open, English merchants will employ their capitals in it. Now, this they must do by one of these two ways; either by emigrating with their capitals here, or by remaining where they are, and employing our merchants here as their factors. Now, if our merchants are only to carry it on as the factors of English merchants, the main profits of the trade, whatever they may be, must revert to England; little more will be effected, than the profits of the trade from one set of English merchants, namely the East-India Company, to the hands of another set of English merchants, namely the employers of our factors. The mere factorage
would

would be our only gain, and to countervail even this small gain, we should have, in consequence of India ships unloading here, a multitude of Asiatic manufactures poured in here, to the ruin of our own. I say, then, that our manufactures would be in a worse state than they are at present. I say more, that our merchants would not be in a better. For though according to this idea, our merchants would gain something by factorage, yet they would have no share in the trade—whereas now, they have a share in that part of the trade which is between London and Dublin, to which the capitals of our merchants are adequate: and you would open the trade between Canton and Dublin—to which the capitals of our merchants are inadequate; and thus give the whole mercantile profits to the English merchants, and give the factorage only to the Irish merchants.

As to the notion of the English merchants themselves emigrating to this country, and settling here to carry on this trade; I do not doubt but it has come from such authority, but some English merchants have said it; but I very much doubt, that any English merchants would do it. I know what English manufacturers said upon the Propositions, that if they passed, they would quit their country, and come over with their capitals to settle here. But I did not credit them; and why? Because there were many manufactures at that time sufficiently encouraged to induce them to emigrate if they were so disposed.—Have they from that time to this done so in any instance? Have they, to carry on the cotton manufacture, which is now so flourishing in this country?—All the advantages of cheap living, low taxes, low wages, which they then said would induce them to come over with their capitals here, have their operation in the cotton manufacture; they have their full operation in many other manufactures; yet have they come over in any instance? Do you believe then what they said on the Propositions? People of wealth will always be
unwilling

unwilling to emigrate; and if the merchants of England were disposed to emigrate, I have little hope that this country would be favoured with a preference. It is only speculatists who emigrate, and America is the scene for speculation. The trade of America to China is as free as the winds. Has any great English merchant emigrated there to purchase it? I never can indulge in those dreams of merchants and manufacturers quitting wealthy and luxurious England to settle here.

But argument has been answered by example; and it has been said that America, though a country small in capital carries on a trade directly with Asia. It is true; and the difference of situation, may be alone sufficient to make it a more eligible trade for America, than for Ireland. For instance, were America to get her teas from China circuitously through Britain, her teas would come to her incumbered with the freight, first from China to London; which is further than to her own port; and then from London to America.—What a monstrous and excentric navigation is this!—Whereas our teas only come charged with the freight from China to London; and then from London to Dublin; which is comparatively but a small aberration.

If America had a wealthy neighbour, as near to her as England is to us, who could supply her with Asiatic productions, perhaps she would prefer being so supplied. Add to this, it does not follow from America pursuing the trade herself, that it is wise in her to do so. It is well known, that a trade may be profitable to the merchant, but injurious to the country. And here is a great error into which many gentlemen fall; they say if the trade is a bad one, the merchant will not pursue it: and this is so far true, that if the trade was an unprofitable one for the merchant he would not pursue it. But if it was profitable to him, though ever so unprofitable to the country, he would. Now this I say, is the fact with respect to a trade with
China.

China. I will give you an example which every man may understand. Suppose a merchant here has 50,000*l.* capital, and that he sent it to Asia for Asiatic manufactures, and that he afterwards sold those manufactures to some of the European nations at a good profit—This would be a good trade for him; but what would the country gain? It would enable him to live more luxuriously—but 10,000*l.* capital employed in home trade, and home manufacture, would be infinitely more advantageous to the country, would employ more hands, and give the poor more bread. Ask the manufacturers in the Liberty, how many men would 10,000*l.* employ in our home manufactures?—and what wealth and industry it would diffuse?—and then, let any man say that 50,000*l.* sent floating round the Cape of Good Hope to China, would be as useful or as profitable to the nation.

Hitherto I have considered this subject in its commercial aspect: now view it in its political one. I ask you, do you know what treaties now subsist between Great Britain and foreign states with respect to this trade? Do you know how far Ireland is included in those treaties? Or to what insult or confiscation an Irish merchant-man might now be exposed in the Indian ocean? What happened to Scotland in the reign of William the III^d? the Scotch established an East-India Company, which was incorporated by their king, and sanctioned by their parliament. What was the consequence? England was in a ferment of discontent—France, Spain, and Holland remonstrated—The Spaniards attacked them with arms—The English with famine. And of 2,800 brave men, that went out upon their first expedition, not above one hundred returned home alive. Is this a situation into which we should imprudently and wantonly precipitate the intrepid spirit of our countrymen? What happened to the East-India Company established at Ostend by the Emperor of Germany in 1722?

England

England and Holland remonstrated against it. What followed? The right honourable Baronet has read the sequel, out of the subsequent treaty. If then so potent a prince as the emperor of Germany was thus compelled to renounce for ever so favourite an object as the East-India Company, what he himself had established; and which he struggled for nine years to protect; what might we expect, if we were now to embark in this trade, without any previous treaty formed, or any explanation whatsoever with any potentate upon earth? I shall cite one instance more to shew the jealousy of nations, about any interference with each other in this trade. By the treaty of Westphalia, which is ratified by all the subsequent treaties down to the present day, Spain is bound not to sail to the East-Indies by the Cape of Good Hope; and therefore can carry on no trade directly from Europe to the East-Indies. Now I ask, what would be the consequence, if you sent a ship to China, and that ship was captured by some European state? How would you proceed? What treaty would you refer to? Suppose the Dutch for instance were to seize your ship. I will read you the words of the last treaty between them and Great Britain, in 1784—"The States General of the United Provinces promise and engage, not to interrupt the navigation of *British* subjects in the Oriental seas." By this they are bound not to interrupt the navigation of British subjects; but not one word of Irish subjects. You will not say that we are British subjects. Ireland is not Britain. What follows? That Ireland is not included in the treaty. But if you say, that though we are not protected against such outrage by treaty, yet we are protected against it by the law of nations. Admit it. But the law of nations is much more indistinct and unsatisfactory than treaty; for if it was not, there would be no need of treaty to sanction it. But suppose the law of nations ever so clear in your favour—I ask, how are you to enforce it? Where is

your fleet? Will you apply to Great Britain and desire her to go to war for you? Now I will suppose her conduct as favourable to you as you could desire, and that she does go to war for you. I ask, how much of the expence of such a war would it be expected you should bear? Or in what *century* would all the profits you could hope to make by the East-India trade, repay you for your share of the contribution? How many useful manufactures at home would the very war itself destroy? How many future manufactures would the incumbrance incurred by such a war ever after depress? Who is there among us, that can put his hand to his heart, and say, he sees his way through this business? For my part, I cannot.

Mr. *Egan*, in a vein of pleasantry, commented on the frequent signals of approbation thrown out during the speech of the honourable Baronet, from the troops of administration when they received the signal from their commander; and observed, "there was more joy among them
 " for one sinner that repented, than for the ninety and
 " nine just persons (pointing to the treasury side of the
 " house) who had no need of repentance." With respect to the *rabble* of argument which had been thrown out to them respecting the insufficiency of capital in this country for the East-India trade; this was no stage to debate that part of the subject—It was not a consideration for that House, whether the merchant of Ireland had capital or not; but it was their business to assert and protect the privilege of commerce, and leave the business of the capital to the merchant. Was it not obvious to every man that the charter of the India Company was now near its period, and was it not equally well known that every trading town in England were petitioning to be guarded against a continuance of their destructive monopoly. It had been conceded this night, that the emulation for this trade had been supported in other nations by British capital, why then were only
 foreign

foreign nations to enjoy the benefit of this advantage? But the present was not the time for debating the principle of such a bill; for the motion before the House was for leave to repeal a law restrictive on the free trade of this country so arduously obtained, which law had skulked into the House unawares; it had been smuggled into the House wrapped up in a renewal bill, during the languor of some stupid unattended evening, and which ought to be kicked out as an insult to the dignity of Parliament, and the rights of this country. It had been said that the measure seemed to tend to *commit* this country with Great Britain; how?—was it meant to threaten the force of Great Britain against this country, for presuming to obtain the exercise of a right ceded to her in the solemnity of a treaty? he hoped not—could it be called *committing* the merchants of Ireland with those of Great Britain? certainly no;—for it only went to unmanacle them from the restrictive monopolies of a company already committed with all the mercantile interest of the British dominions. It had been asserted, that the right of this country to that trade had never been questioned; but he asked, had we any instances of that right having been exercised.—Now, for God's sake, Sir, said he, if there is such a right, let it be recognized and established by some one instance of its exercise. Let us for the sake of precedent freight only one vessel of this country to the regions beyond the Cape of Good Hope even with commodities, the most injurious to her interests.—I do not mean a freight of our *ordinary convicts*, but of his majesty's ministers in this country, to *Batany Bay*; and though I am not, for my own part, much disposed for long voyages—I should not be unwilling, once in my life, to accompany thither the whole treasury bench, and all the light troops in the rear, in the capacity of *super cargo*, if it was only for the pleasure of seeing them safe there.

This folly threw the whole House into a peal of laughter.

Mr. *Archdall* was against the motion.—If it were true that Great Britain was a part of the empire, all her advantages must circulate through the constituting mass—The argument which was considered the strongest in favour of the measure was in his opinion the easiest answered—that is the RIGHT of the country to this commerce—the freedom of our trade, he said, was left untouched, for who attempted to touch it but ourselves? the question was one, not of metaphysical right, but of practical utility; and the sense of right should be controlled by a sense of expediency.

Mr. *B. Conyngham* was not at all surprised that gentlemen were fond of giving scope to mercantile adventure. As to the motion, he said he had an opinion different from that of either side of the House. If Britain thought it for the good of the empire to confine the trade to a monopoly, the people of Ireland loved the empire too well to dissent. Yet he thought something should be done with respect to this trade. Many things in the charter of the Company pressed hard on this country and called for alteration. He knew not whether the trade was an advantageous one or not; but he thought that other countries would not have engaged in the trade with so much avidity if it were not profitable.—The import of India commodities into this country, amounting to near 500,000*l.* per annum, were such as suggested no mean idea of the importance of the trade—besides the English merchants are now speculating on sugars, and thinking of bringing them from the East on better terms than they at present have them from the West Indies. If the monopoly of the East still remain with the Company, this country would lose a very large sum in this article, the imports on which annually amount to upwards of 400,000*l.* He argued not against the monopoly, but he thought if Ireland gave up the trade she should do it with her eyes open. He thought it would be unfair
to

to infer from gentlemen's opposing this motion that they were averse to every restriction or modification of the monopoly—for his part he was of opinion some restrictions were necessary—though he should vote against the motion. As to the argument that the trade was not beneficial—it deserved no weight—merchants might reason from that circumstance either for or against engaging in the trade—but it was not a consideration that should influence nations, which ought not to have their rights confined by any such petty considerations. England, for instance, would not bear controul or restriction even in the worthless trade to Nootka.

Mr. Conyngham then made some observations on the backward state of Ireland in maritime affairs, occasioned solely by the restraints under which her commerce had laboured—the whole shipping of the kingdom of Ireland, he said, amounted to less by one-third than the shipping of the single town of Liverpool—the House should not then, by their arguments against the trade, depress the rising spirit of the country.

Mr. *Barrington* opposed the motion principally on the ground that it was ungenerous toward England, and prejudicial to the rising commerce of this country; of which he described the hills as gilded by the sun of prosperity, and the vallies adorned by the rich clothing of agricultural abundance, in as much as it must divest and distract the capital, already vested in the present thriving arts and commerce of the country, to vague and distant objects uncertain of profit, and pregnant with difficulty and hazard.

Having said much to this effect, he reverted to the old ground which has generally distinguished this gentleman's speeches—that of inveighing against the motives of the opposition in most of their favourite measures—which he contended to be merely the desire of obstructing the business of government in the hands of an administration, whose
places

places they wished for, whose success they envied, and whose talents and virtues the honourable orator, on this, as most occasions, *enamelled* in the highest style of *fulgent* panegyric—and he concluded, by terming the present motion—a “*mask of patriotism, to a measure of party* ;” and he declared himself happy in the opportunity of plucking off *the one*, and exposing *the other*.

Mr. Curran said, that as the silence of gentlemen on questions of this kind was considered a crime, he should preserve himself from blame by saying a few words.—He then entered into vindication of Mr. Grattan for having been formerly silent on this subject—he had been engaged in a greater work—that of raising that House to the honourable situation they then held—in which they MIGHT be independent if they would. By the present motion the House was not called on to disturb the public tranquillity—but merely to expunge an interlineation of their clerk by which the country had been long deprived of benefits to which Great Britain would have waded through an expence of blood and millions. He adverted to the distinction that had been made—that this was not giving up a right, but making a voluntary concession of the exercise of that right—this, he said, was not merely *submitting* to subjugation, but coming forward in the gallant servility of a Capadocian in the fury of oppression to *demand the chain*. Other gentlemen had said, “ don’t engage the country in a trade that has ruined all that have ever ventured in it”—as if gentlemen thought that the motion went to engage them to create commissioners to send the bread of the country to India to be eaten.—No act of parliament can prescribe the channels in which commerce shall flow—it was the object of the motion only to leave the field of commerce open to the merchant, and let him avail himself of advantages as he can.—The smallness of our capital had been urged against the motion—that objection, he said, amounted to this—“ You have but
“ little

“ little money! therefore buy at London, for 200*l.* what “ you can import directly into Dublin for 50*l.*”—He desired the House to consider whether, as men of common faith and common probity, they could refuse to their fellow-subjects the exercise of this right which all acknowledged them to possess—for his part, he thought not, and by the determination of the House on this question, their character would stand or fall, if Ireland was not a besotted nation.—Another objection that had been offered was, that the assertion of the right would commit this country with Great Britain.—Were such grounds fit to be held out in this assembly? If it is meant, Sir, (said Mr. Curran) that the avowal of an undoubted Right of this country is committing us in hostilities with Great Britain—I declare to God my blood runs cold at the very idea.—What, Sir, is the dignity of the British Lion reduced to such meanness, as to set up a threat of strength against exercise of right? Or, is the British nation to be held out as that kind of ruffian, who wants to assert by force and exact by injustice, that which she could not defend in equity or in argument?—But why is the British nation held up in this House? Or, is this a question between nations?—Certainly not.—It is a question between a chartered company of a few monopolists and all the rest of his majesty’s subjects in both kingdoms—a question which if decided according to the rights of this country, would create an influx of men and an accession of capital—not an influx of men to destroy our morals, or of capital to buy up to the public faith;—but of men to improve our industry and commerce, and of capital to cherish both.

The monopoly of the India Company has excited a competition with every other body of British traders—but their influence and corruption had hitherto broke down every opposition to that Monopoly. The present question, therefore, is simply between the India Company and the people of Ireland; and the issue pending is, whether the influence of the British minister as agent of the India Company

pany could prevail on a majority in an Irish Parliament to surrender the rights of their country. He concluded by sympathizing with the people on the dangerous situation of their liberties as British subjects, when the engines of public corruption were brought to play in upon their representatives, in parliament assembled, and influence them to a desertion of one of their most valuable privileges.—On these grounds he would vote for the motion.

Mr. Grattan could not avoid rising to bear testimony against some principles he had heard in the course of the debate.—He had heard it declared that this country may be happy enough in managing her trade, so as to favour a monopoly to a British company. He had heard it avowed with unbounded meanness that an exercise of the right of Free-trade on the part of this country, by a claim of participation in a commerce with the independent empires beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan, was invidious towards British interest, and would commit her with this country, and that it was therefore the duty of parliament to prevent such a consequence.—But he denied that any right existed in the parliament to deprive its constituents of an undoubted right to trade with one-fourth of the world.—“ They are not your servants,” said Mr. Grattan, “ you are their trustees—and you have no more right to surrender up this free-trade, than you have to surrender up the constitution—and you have no more right to surrender up that than to abolish the rock on which the island is founded.” With respect to what had been stated by a right honourable Baronet, (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) of the cession by the court of Vienna, of her India trade in favour of Great Britain; he begged leave to remind the right honourable member, this cession was part of a capitulation, and therefore no way applicable to the case of Ireland, unless it is intended to capitulate away the rights of her people with-
out

out the plea of necessity or even of prudence—equally inapplicable was the argument which talked of compensation between nations for mutual benefits, for this country had little obligations to England—none to the India Company—nor was offered any equivalent for the surrender of so valuable a right. He contended that no parliament whatever, had a right to destroy the commerce of a country—though it had a right to regulate it; but if under the pretence of regulation parliament destroyed that commerce, it was guilty of a violation of the confidence of the people, the rights of the country, and the principles of the constitution.

He was ready to admit the preference due to English connexion and English commerce, but could England hold for this country none?—The surrender now asserted was a monopoly of our commerce home and collateral; a surrender without any reciprocity. But though he thought it right to prefer the interests of England to that of all foreigners, he could not hold it right to prefer them to our own, for this would be to set up the interest of a company of British monopolists against the rights of the people of Ireland; a company who take no part of our commodities into their trade, but charged us the highest price for every thing our occasions required of them; and as if to punish and reprove us in the criminality of the surrender, it was made an act of our own parliament. He condemned the precipitancy of attempting to reject the motion without assenting to call to the bar mercantile men, who were best judges of their own interests, and best able to give the House competent information as to the extent of their capital, and the great objects of that trade furnished, they were now about to be excluded unheard.—Suffer, said he, the bill to be brought in, and I will bring to your bar in addition to your own merchants these of another country, who shall offer you such deposit of capital as shall remove your

great objections on the line of Irish incompetence to the East-India commerce. Gentlemen ask, will you render the trade of Ireland injurious to England—I remember when a suit was urged to pass in this House the commercial propositions, it was held out as an allurement that 600,000l. of English capital would immediately center in this country, and the same men who urged this consideration, now object to the very same principle—the very same argument now adduced against the expediency of our trade to the East, was equally applicable to our trade in the West—and the very same gentlemen who now oppose this question seemed equally forward to oppose your Western trade, and callumniate the very project about thirteen or fourteen years ago, though they are not now ashamed to take so much credit to themselves or its consequent success and prosperity.—Gentlemen talked of committing this country with Great Britain by pursuing this measure—but he could see in it no more danger of hostility with Great Britain, than with the *Cham* of *Tartary* or any Indian potentate.—When gentlemen held up the name of Great Britain as a threat to intimidate in that House, they should name their authority—Ireland, he thought, could have no hostilities to fear in which England was not equally concerned; and he was sure no British minister or agent, would make claims in that assembly under the threat of British strength, if the idea was not suggested by Irish meanness; with respect to the assertion of a right honourable Baronet, Sir Laurence Parsons, that he had been silent on the India business in the commercial questions of former years respecting the rights of this country—he said it was not *fact*, for in the propositions agitated in the year 1785, he had spoken fully to the trade of India—nor was it *argument*, for a difference of time calls for a difference of proceeding—when he and his friends did not move on this subject, the charter had many years to run; and when they *did* move, the charter was near expiring—“ We did not” said he, “ bring in a motion formerly
“ because

“ because it was improper, but we bring it on now because it is necessary.—That is the answer to the right honourable member.”

Gentlemen had talked of their dependance on Great Britain for the maintenance of the Protestant religion and ascendancy in this country; but did they hope to fortify the Protestant interest and ascendancy in this country, by betraying the confidence of Protestant constituents, and surrendering the rights of Ireland to a British company of monopolists. In 1779 it was declared in the address of this House to the throne, that nothing but a *Free Trade*, on the broad maxim that British monopoly should no longer affect Irish commerce, would save this country from ruin. This principle was followed up, and a free trade was obtained; and therefore the House was not now free to eat the words of that address, by surrendering up that free trade. That if gentlemen were to give up, without even the pretence of that principle, to the support of which they had heretofore pledged their lives and fortunes, they would render parliament instrumental to a fraud upon the people. To offer our rising prosperity as an argument for such a claim, was the argument of an highway-man.—“ Sir, you have a large salary, or a good estate, and therefore you must give me your purse, as you are rich enough without it.”—So says the minister to the people of this country—“ You have a prosperous linen business—a rising agriculture—an improving commerce—therefore give me up your East-India trade, or you will become too rich.”

Mr. Grattan concluded a brilliant oration, wherein we have been able only to scan the outline of his flight, as he shot like a meteor through the regions of oratory—by warning the members of that House against a base surrender of the rights of their constituents who sent them there, and to whom they must be responsible for such unpardonable treachery.

Mr Corry said, that when he was in opposition to former administrations, he had three times brought on the agitation of this question; but for reasons which it would now be tedious to explain, he never did think it expedient to bring forward the question in any substantial form, and he hoped it would now be pressed.

Mr. George Ponsonby. I do confess, Mr. Speaker, that I am somewhat surprised at the kind of argument offered this night against an admitted and most valuable right of this country, by gentlemen who sit opposite to me, and who have so shamefully deserted that right.

A right honourable Baronet has told us, 'tis inexpedient for us to claim this right lest it might encourage smuggling—and given us to understand that we shall have no tea at all, unless we chuse to drink it with the British East-India Company.—I profess, Sir, I do not see how a preclusion of this country from the exercise of this trade, is to prevent smuggling, so long as a superior interest in this way can be cultivated with European nations who enjoy the trade regardless of the contract of Great Britain or her India Company.

Another argument, Sir, is, that Ireland has no capital to carry on the trade.—This, Sir, is strange language from a gentleman who presides over the finances of this country. In the name of God, Sir—If we have no capital, how then can we injure Great Britain?—Give us the toy!—let us play with it. It will gratify our national vanity.—But why is the whole strength of administration drawn out to oppose the measure—when by granting it you can silence us for ever upon this subject;—for while you argue it as impossible for us to avail ourselves of the privilege, how can you possibly dissent from my motion.

It seems it is a “ruinous trade” too.—Do you think, then, that the people will persevere in the commerce, if they find it so? Or, is it probable that a monopolizing
Company,

Company, or their agent in this House, would be so tenacious of securing to themselves a ruinous trade?—This is strange language, Sir, to hold in parliament.

An honourable Baronet (Sir Laurence Parsons) had said “we sought to take this privilege from the India Company, a time when it was pledged to them on the faith of the English parliament, for a series of years.”—These years, Sir, are now on the point of expiration, and the British parliament will no longer have a right to grant away the commerce of this country without the permission of her own parliament;—and therefore it cannot be improper to assert your claim to that right, before any new compact is established to which your silence may give sanction.

An honourable Baronet, too, has said, it is the duty of parliament to watch over the commerce of the country, and to prevent her capital from being diverted from objects of certain prosperity, to vague and distant speculations.

But the true principle is, that parliament should never meddle with the application of capital to any branch of commerce, but leave it entirely to the individuals who vest that capital.—Can we know better their interests, or be more anxious to promote them, than themselves?—So long as the legislature does not tamper with certain branches of commerce, by high bounties, but leave them to the discretion of traders themselves, commerce and capital will always find their proper channels.

The honourable Baronet has said, “tea is a luxury, and that ten thousand pounds expended in the Liberty, would do more good than an hundred thousand sent to China for tea.”—Why, Sir, tea, instead of being a mere *luxury*, is become a necessary of life in this country.—The lowest of your servants, and poorest of your peasantry use it—and if a capital of some hundred thousand pounds is annually expended on this article for home consumption, I see no reason

reason why our own merchants should not enjoy the advantage of the trade.

Another honourable gentleman has said, we shall, by asserting our claim, commit this country with England.—What, Sir, at such a time as this, for this House to be insulted with such language!—I am really startled at the idea.

Are we fallen back to the old ground, when England legislated for this country—are we returned to those times when it was said in this House—if any project was urged for the improvement of our commerce—stop! stop!—you are going upon dangerous ground! England will interfere?—Is an East-India Company the people of England?—Is a British minister the people of England?—NO—and good God!—Sir, shall we be told, that the representatives of the people of Ireland do, by asserting the commercial rights of their country which are not at all questioned—commit the country with England, and risk the loss of her connection?—Sir, I respect that connection, I will defend that connection of the Irish parliament with the English crown to the last drop of my blood, and the last shilling of my fortune. But, Sir, if we are united to that crown, are we also united with the English parliament?—Does not that crown encircle the brows of my king to whom I owe my allegiance?—and must I consider him so unmindful of the happiness of his people of Ireland, as to require of me, under that allegiance, a surrender of these rights to a Company of British monopolists? Or is this the way to secure the regards of the people of England?—NO, Sir: the more you support your own dignity, and shew your regard for a well-regulated commerce, the more zealously they will guard, love, and honour you as a part of themselves. The people of England, Sir, will ever regard the character of a freeman above that of a slave.

An honourable young friend of mine (the honourable Mr. Stuart) with whom I have generally the good fortune
to

to concur, has argued that we enjoy a protection from British fleets, for which we give no equivalent—and that the surrender of this trade is inadequate to the advantages we derive under British protection.

I would ask my honourable friend, is the navigation act and its construction no equivalent? Who mans the fleets and armies of Great Britain?—Is our blood no contribution towards the defence of the empire.—Give me leave to say, Sir, that the contribution of men from this country to the navies and armies of Great Britain is such a strength, as if withheld, would very much humiliate both her power and her fame. Does my honourable friend suppose the rejection of this motion to-night will be felt by the people of Great Britain, as conferring a compliment upon them?—Certainly no. The only way by which you can compliment Great Britain and do justice to your own country, is by first insisting on the right in its fullest extent, and then compromising, if you will, for an equivalent, should you chuse to wave that right.

An honourable Baronet, (Sir Laurence Parsons) has said, that by attempting to pursue this trade without the concurrence of the India Company, we shall risk hostilities with other nations and be deprived of British protection—for Irish subjects cannot be called British subjects.—Now, Mr. Speaker, what sort of picture does this argument draw of our connection *with*, or dependance *on* Great Britain?—It is scarcely a year since we were called on by Great Britain to support her right of commerce in another quarter of the world, by joining in a war with Spain, and to vote 20,000l. to support a contest, in the issue of which we were to expect war only, and no commerce at all.

But now, that we urge a claim to exercise our right of commerce in another quarter, we are told, that as Irishmen we are not British subjects, and that England will abandon us to the hostilities of other nations.—But what fear can there

there be of war in this case? Will any foreign nation go to war with us for opposing the monopoly of a British East-India Company? Or will the nations beyond the Cape commence hostilities against us for relieving them from the extortions of the India Company, and giving them goods on better terms?—Beside, what were the words of the Duke of Rutland to both Houses of Parliament when Viceroy of this country, at the time of our acquiring the free trade, “I rejoice that I am the person to acquaint the parliament of Ireland that Great Britain accedes to their wishes, and that both countries are united against all the world in the benefits of a foreign trade.”—Here, I appeal to gentlemen on that side of the House, if we have not, in the official declaration of an Irish Viceroy, a solemn pledge of the faith of England to defend our commercial privileges as her own?

We have been told of a Scotch colony at Darien, who fought to establish a trade there in the reign of King William, but were refused protection, and exposed to the hostilities of the Spaniards.—The people, Sir, who attempted that settlement commenced their operations, not by conciliation and peaceable industry, but by invasive warfare—and when they applied to King William, that monarch, sensible of their misconduct, refused to commit the nation in a war for their sake, and left them to the fate they deserved.

One right honourable member on *that* side of the House, (the honourable Mr. Burton Cunningham), has expressed sentiments on this subject, honourable to the feelings of an Irish senator—he has spoken like a man with whom the spirit of the gentleman has not sunk in the courtier. It was fortunate for the men with whom he generally votes, there was one man to be found amongst them not afraid to avow sentiments favourable to the rights of his country. I am glad of it for their sakes—for really, Sir, I have some pity for their degradations. They talk to us of faction and innovation

novation : If such things do exist, it must be amongst themselves, I know of no such principles on this side of the House.—For my own part, Sir, I declare most solemnly my inviolable attachment to the constitution as established by the revolution of 1688.—I am attached to those measures which have been repeatedly brought forward by me and my friends on this side of the House, for securing to this country the rights of that constitution.—I mean a place-bill, a pension-bill, a responsibility-bill, and a bill to secure the freedom of election; to these principles I am pledged, and no administration in this country shall ever receive a vote from me until those principles become the law of the land.

Some other little remarks have been hazarded on the question of this night, and one gentleman called it “a mask” of patriotism to a measure of party, and he rejoiced in “plucking it off.”—If he has plucked it off, a right honourable gentleman of that side of the House (B. Connyng-ham) has picked it up and put it on; and give me leave to say, Sir, that he looks better in it than any other honourable member who has this night risen in this House, and with bare and unblushing front, to surrender the rights of his country at the feet of a British minister.

The question being put, the House divided,

Ayes,	—	—	70
Noes,	—	—	156

Majority against the motion, 86

Tellers for the Ayes, Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Egan.

For the Noes, the hon. Mr. Stuart and Mr. Parsons.

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and my friends on this side of the House, for leading to
the country the rights of that constitution—I mean a piece
of a quack-bill, a religious bill, and a bill to re-
move the question of election to those who are I am
pledged, and no administration in this country shall ever
receive a vote from me until these principles become the
law of the land.

Some other late remarks have been handed on the
question of this night, and one gentleman called it "a small
of parties in a meeting of party, and he rejected in
"plucking it out."—If he has rejected it, it is a great loss
to the noble gentleman of the side of the House. I cannot
have had it up and out of it, and I have to
say, that the noble gentleman is in a very different position
member who has this night taken to the House, and with
bare and unadorned, to remember the rights of his
country at the feet of a British minister.

The question being put, the House divided.

Resolved, That the House do not assent to the Bill.
Ayes 100. Noes 100.